

# Il Gazzettino

March 2018

## Message from the Board

We have added a new feature to our FOISOH website, a blog by **Tommaso Gambino** titled “**Italy – A Presto.**” The first posting, an Introduction, was on March 1. The second post titled “**A Morning in Rome,**” appeared on March 15, and the third, titled “**SPQR – Rome’s Legacy,**” will appear on April 1. Visit our website at <http://www.friendsofitalyhawaii.org/> to view the postings.

## *In this issue:*

- 1 Message from the Board**
- 1 Upcoming Events**  
Island Olive Oil Tasting!
- 3 Past Events**  
Brunch at the Outrigger
- 4 Feature Story**  
Luigi Del Bianco: The Man Who Saved Jefferson’s Face and Put a Twinkle in Lincoln’s Eye
- 10 Announcements**
  - Arrivederci Anne
  - Cooking Holiday in Abruzzo

## Upcoming Events

**March 31: Island Olive Oil Tasting**  
**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**606 Kailua Road, Kailua**



## Upcoming Events: Island Olive Oil Tasting

**Date:** Saturday March 31, 2018

**Where:** Island Olive Oil Kailua (shop located at [609 Kailua Road, Kailua](#))

**Time:** 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

**Cost:** \$25 for FOISOH members; \$35 for non-members.

**RSVP:** Please register through the website by no later than **Wednesday, March 28, 2018**. Click [here](#) to register today!

**Details:** Do you think you can tell good-quality olive oil from the cheap kind? Take a trip to the Windward Side and spend a couple hours learning from the experts.

Island Olive Oil features over 60 olive oils and vinegars; Island Olive Oil owners Angel and Brian are excited to put you through a battery of "sensory" tests and teach you how to spot a high-quality olive oil and discern between regional differences, styles, tastes, grades, and much more. There will also be a companion tasting for balsamic vinegar. All attendees will get a special gift!



## Past Events

### Brunch at the Outrigger Canoe Club, March 4

Below are some photos of our **brunch at the Outrigger Canoe Club on March 4**. Photos courtesy of Magda Alexander- Grazie mille Magda!





## Feature Story

# LUIGI DEL BIANCO: THE MAN WHO SAVED JEFFERSON'S FACE AND PUT A TWINKLE IN LINCOLN'S EYE

By Mark Ethridge

**Summer, 1936:** Luigi del Bianco, Italian immigrant and naturalized U.S citizen, stands in partially-enclosed wooden scaffolding hanging by steel cables hundreds of feet above the valley below. He is studying an ugly crack in Thomas Jefferson's huge, 18-foot wide stone lip. From a distance, the crack looks like a huge cold sore. Del Bianco ponders what to do, and finally decides he will remove the cracked stone and install a cubic foot of granite plug that will remove the blemish. His efforts are be successful.



Luigi del Bianco with a small pneumatic drill working on Mount Rushmore

## Feature Story (cont.)

Gutzon Borglum, the designer of the Mount Rushmore figures would later say of Del Bianco's work: ***“Luigi Del Bianco, one of the best stone carvers Rushmore ever had, patched the crack in Jefferson’s lip with a foot deep piece of granite held in place by pins- the only patch on the whole sculpture, and one that is hard to detect even close up.”***

Later Del Bianco would give the same “refinement of expression” to the face of Lincoln. Just carving stone was not enough, it was necessary to bring life to the giant sculptures. Del Bianco would struggle with how to bring life to Lincoln’s eyes. He decided to highlight the pupils with wedge-shaped granite stones that would reflect the light.

*He would say many years later:*

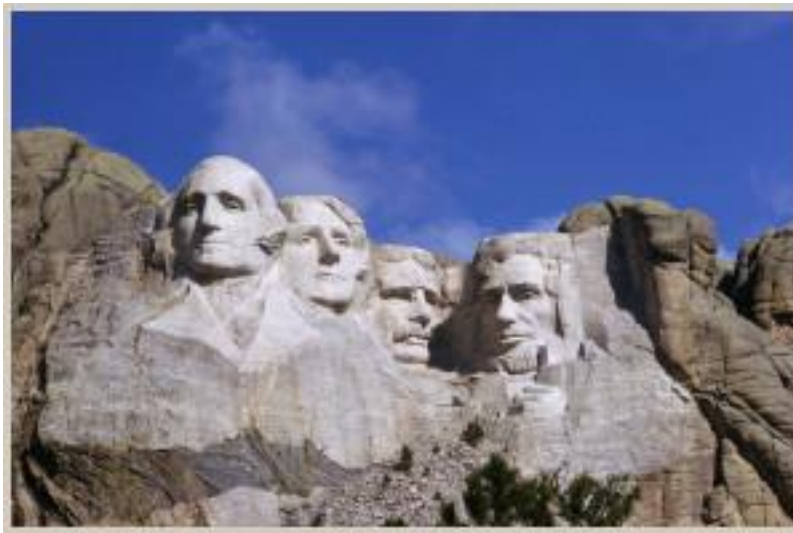
***“I could only see from this far what I was doing, but the eye of Lincoln had to look just right from many miles distant.” “I know every line and ridge, each small bump and all the details of that head (Lincoln’s) so well.”***

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## Feature Story (cont.)

Work would continue on Mount Rushmore until funding ran out on October 31, 1941. The original plan was to carve the figures down to the waist level, but the carving would remain “unfinished” with only the profiles of the presidents.



Luigi Del Bianco was born during October 1892 on a ship near Le Havre, France while his parents were returning to Italy from a trip to the United States.” He grew up in the town of Meduno in Italy in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region northeast of Venice. His parents, recognizing his artistic talents, sent him to study under a master stone carver in imperial Vienna when he was 11 years old.

Later, he went to Vermont for a while when his cousin told him skilled stone cutters were needed there. When World War I broke out, he would return to fight for Italy. After the war, in 1920, he again went back to Vermont and finally settled in Port Chester, New York, where a fellow carver introduced him to Borglum with whom he went to work in the sculptor’s Connecticut studio.

## Feature Story (cont.)

Del Bianco would work with Borglum during the 1920s designing and carving the face of Robert E. Lee on Stone Mountain in Georgia. Borglum would resign in a dispute with the funders and move on to a Wars of America sculpture in Newark, New Jersey, and then to the Mount Rushmore project. In 1933, Borglum would hire Del Bianco at a rate of \$1.50 per hour or about \$72 per week, a much higher rate than any of the other workers because of Del Bianco's unique skills. There would be difficulties with funding the Rushmore project, and Del Bianco would quit and be rehired several times because of this. Borglum would die in 1941; after completing the Rushmore project, Del Bianco would return to stone cutting in Port Chester where he would live until 1969.

Del Bianco's name would be largely forgotten, and the National Park Service would only recognize him anonymously as one of the 400 workers who aided Borglum and his son, Lincoln Borglum, but no specific mentions of Luigi Del Bianco's contribution would be mentioned in any of the official histories of the project. However, the evidence of Del Bianco's special genius was lying in the National Archives and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. These records would be discovered after many, many hours of searching by Luigi's son, Caesar, and his grandson, Lou Del Bianco. And so begins the second part of this extraordinary story, the 25-year effort by Luigi's son and his grandson to give him the credit he deserved.



## Feature Story (cont.)

This quest started in the late 1980s when Caesar Del Bianco read an official history of the Mount Rushmore project. There was no mention of his father's work. Douglas Gladstone, who later wrote a book praising Del Bianco's achievements, told Caesar that omitting Luigi Del Bianco's role was like "writing about the New York Yankees without mentioning Joe DiMaggio."

Caesar began an exhaustive search and enlisted the support of his nephew, Lou. After extensive searches in the National Archives and Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., they hit the jackpot – the correspondence and writing of Gutzon Borglum, or the "Borglum Papers." These writings reveal that Borglum recognized Luigi Del Bianco as an artist and considered him essential to the project. The following are some of his statements:

**June 1933:** "We could double our progress if we had two like Bianco."

**July 1935:** Now I have decided we must keep Bianco and keep him happy. If he were working for me I would pay him eleven or twelve dollars. I want him to receive a dollar an hour. You may charge me with the difference. **The help he is, the ability to understand is worth much more to the work.**

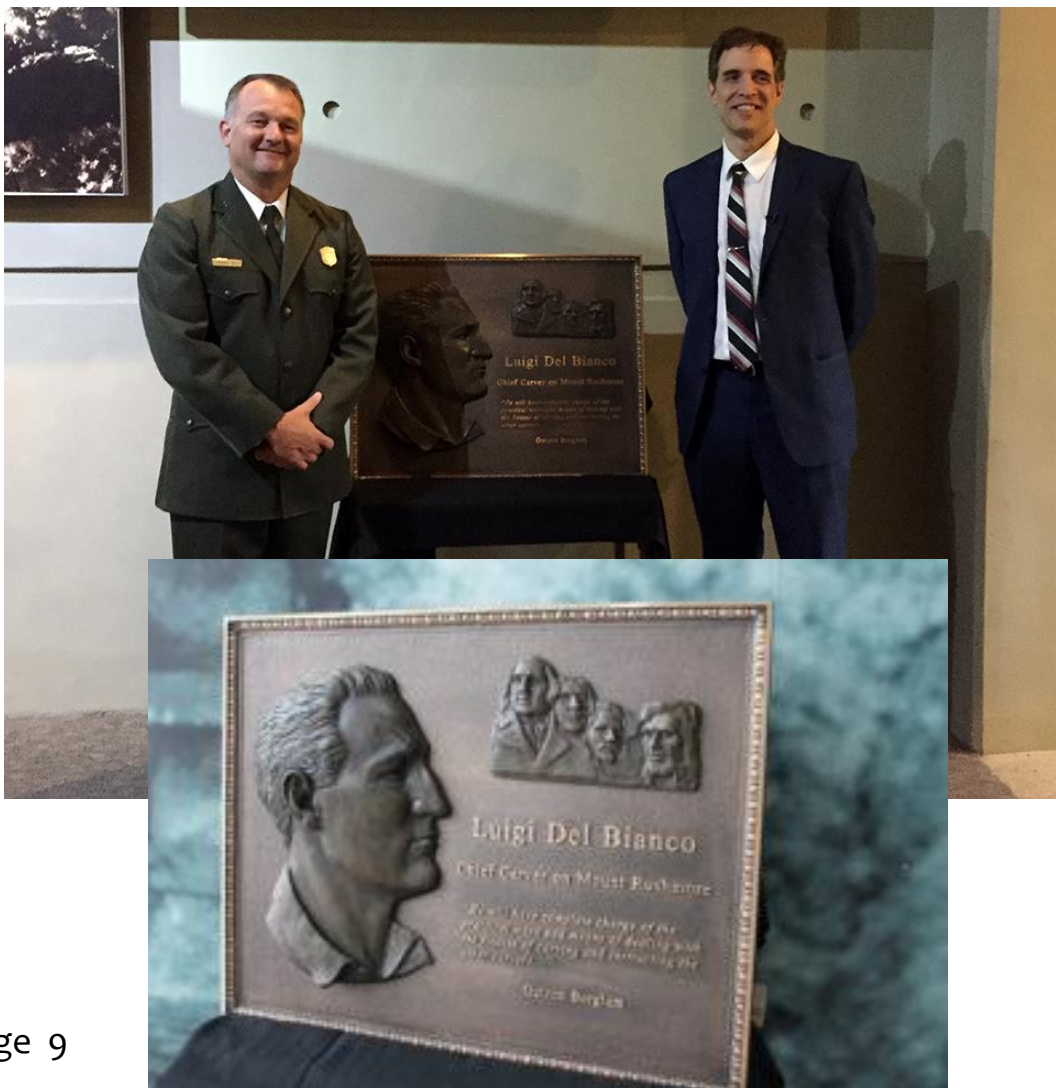
**July 21, 1935:** His leaving will stop all work on the features of Washington and Jefferson (after a pay dispute with the financiers).

**1935:** Bianco, as you know, is back, and his presence emphasizes the frightful handicap this work labors under. **He is the only intelligent, efficient stone carver on the work who understands the language of the sculptor.**



## Feature Story (cont.)

After Caesar's death in 2009, Lou Del Bianco continued the struggle to recognize his grandfather's achievements. To make a final determination on appropriate recognition, the National Park Service sent historians Bob Sutton and Tim Good to Port Chester, NY in October 2015 to review the 75 documents stored by Lou Del Bianco. They were impressed by the evidence and ultimately recommended that a plaque be installed at the memorial to recognize the gifted immigrant artisan. On September 16, 2017, the National Park Service officially unveiled the plaque recognizing his role as the chief carver of Mount Rushmore.



## Feature Story

“We are proud to recognize Luigi Del Bianco’s contributions as Chief Carver at Mount Rushmore National Memorial. His story highlights the artistry embodied in this iconic tribute to our nation’s history,” said Park Superintendent Cheryl Schreier. “The remarkable effort and diverse talents required to build Mount Rushmore continue to inspire people from all over the world.”

Luigi Del Bianco knew the value of what he had done. Now we all know, thanks to his son’s and grandson’s efforts. And when we look at those faces on Mount Rushmore, we see the artistry of Luigi Del Bianco.

***“I would do it again, even knowing all the hardships involved”, Luigi stated in a 1966 interview with the Herald Statesman. “I would work at Mount Rushmore even without pay, if necessary. It was a great privilege granted me.”***



Lou Del Bianco has written a book about his grandfather’s life titled: *“Out of Rushmore’s Shadow: The Luigi Del Bianco Story.”* The book is available at: <https://www.luigimountrushmore.com/>

The website above was also the source for much of the information and several of the photos for this article.

## Announcements

### **Arrivederci, Anne!**

Anne Caputo, Vice-President and long-time member of FOISOH left Hawaii in late February to go to Los Angeles to be with friends and family. Thank you, Anne, for your many years of service to our organization and we wish you many happy days there on the mainland.

We understand you will come back to visit us, of course. We hope to see you at the Annual Dinner Meeting in May.

Best wishes, Anne

Tante grazie!



# Announcements

## Five-Day Italian Cooking Holiday in Abruzzo

Charlene de Lory is putting together a short Abruzzo cooking trip from June 30 –July 5, 2018 (five-day trip for \$1799) as well as a longer 8-day trip. If you are interested, please contact her directly at 818-222-2796.

*Charlene de Lory's cooking holiday in Abruzzo Italy*  
**FUN \* FRIENDS \* MEMORIES**  
Five days or eight days, July 1 through the 8th  
includes one free night in Rome



ITALIAN COOKING HOLIDAY  
A Casa Di Ezio

absorb taste discover explore

Join Chef Ezio in Abruzzo Italy  
for a one week cooking class  
July 1-8, 2018 \$3,500  
or  
Five days for \$1,799. July 1-5  
(depends on rate of exchange)

**Includes**

- Shuttle to and from Rome via minibus
- Boutique B&B Accommodations
- All Meals, Wine & Snacks
- Hands on cooking lessons
- Cooking demonstrations
- Truffle Hunt
- Cheese Class
- Olive Oil Class
- Guided Tours



2 hours from South East Rome

Along the way you can revel in the beauty of Italy's best kept secret, Abruzzo, whose lush mountains and national parks are home to bears, wolves and tigers. Its rolling hills, boasts some of Italy's most beautiful hill towns as well as award-winning vineyards.

contact Charlene for more details and to help you register , 818-222-2796

<https://italiancooking.holiday/5-day-italy-food-wine-tour-free-night-rome/>